UNCLE SAM

By

MARTHA S. GIELOW

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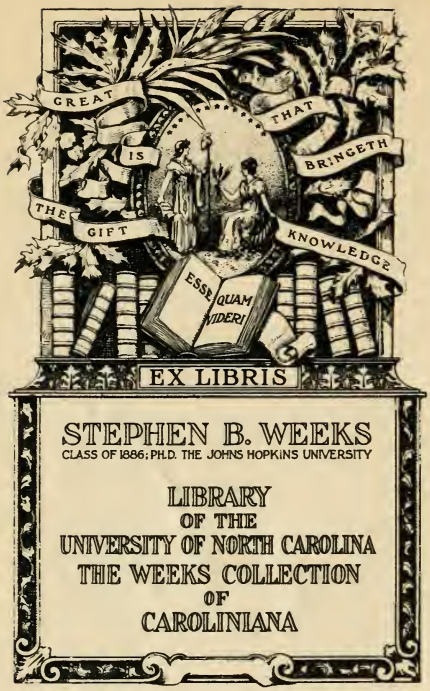
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UNCLE SAM

"Hit 'pears like them mountings air settin' jes' zackly in the way to keep out the looks o' the worl' beyan'" (P. 14)

UNCLE SAM

By
MARTHA S. GIELOW
Author of "Old Andy the Moonshiner," "Mammy's Reminiscences," "Old Plantation Days," etc.

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Dedicated to
"The First Young Angel
of the White House"

79605

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I

"YOU HAIN'T NO REVENUE?"

WILLIAM VINCENT drew a long breath as he reached the top of the hill. Resting on his surveying instruments he looked out upon the view beyond with a gaze of admiration and contemplation.

"Great luck!" he exclaimed, breaking the silence that enfolded him; "great luck! There's a cabin in the nick of time to save my life."

Lifting the instruments, the young surveyor started towards the one room, windowless cabin so typical of the scattered homes in these Appalachian vastnesses.

An old man, working in his rocky, hillside patch, laid down his wooden grub-hoe and waited to receive the stranger.

"Howdy. I 'lows ye be from the level?"

"Good-afternoon," replied Vincent heartily. "Yes, it certainly is more level where I came from. I'm a surveyor looking into the geology of these rock beds; my name is Vincent—William Vincent."

"Wal, my name air Jo Douglas, though I'm called jes' Uncle Jonah. Won't you-uns come in and go bye with me? Thar's ther gourd."

Putting down his instrument, Vincent, lifting from the peg the long-handled vegetable dipper, took a drink. "Fine water, Mr. Douglas," he remarked.

"Jes' Uncle Jonah, ef you please," the old man replied; "hit sounds more nat'ral and friendly in these parts."

"Well, Uncle Jonah, then," the young man responded pleasantly. "By Jove! I never had such a pull up a hill. This

"Top o' the ridge—thar hain't no gittin' down much when ye git up"

must be the highest spur on the ridge, is it not?"

"Wal, jes' erbout—thar hain't no gittin' down much when you git up, and no gittin' up much when you onct git down."

"How did you ever come to settle so far up and out of the world, Uncle Jonah?"

"Don' know, stranger; jes' found myself here, I reckin, an' jes' stayed. Thar comes maw," pointing a rough, knotted finger towards a woman slowly climbing the hill on the other side of the cabin, her arms loaded with wood for the supper fire. Dropping the armful of wood inside the cabin door, she walked to the men.

"Howdy, stranger," she said.

"Howdy, Mrs. Douglas," young Vincent replied, shaking her proffered hand. "You came up that hill with more breath than I did."

"Jes' Aunt Cindy," she answered; "that's what I'm called in these here parts, an' as fer breath—wal, hit takes breath ter tote wood up, I kin tell ye."

"You've got a fine view from your house, Aunt Cindy. It's worth a fortune, if you only know it."

"Wal, it kin go for two-bits, ef any one air fool enough to pay for hit," she replied. "I don't see no good in a view, nowhow."

"My gracious alive, Aunt Cindy, don't you love to sit here and look out upon that wonderful range of mountains, and enjoy the grandeur and beauty, and wonder about the great world beyond?"

"Settin' and wonderin' hain't gwine to fetch no wood up an' do the work," she said slowly. "And when I do git a chanct to set I air too tired to think 'bout them fur-off peaks. Hit 'pears like them mountings air settin' jes' 'zacly in the way to keep out the looks of the worl' beyan."

"They do keep out the world most effectively," he said, "and yet the world will reach the heart of these mountains some day, and they won't be half so beautiful then, stripped of the timber and gaping with mines and quarries. You have a fine place for apples over there on that slope, Uncle Jonah. Why don't you set out some trees and grow fruit?"

"Wal, I don't know 'zacly."

"You might apply to your Uncle Sam; he would give you some slips to experiment with."

"My Uncle who?" asked the astonished backwoodsman.

"Your Uncle Sam," replied Vincent.

"Never heerd I had no relations of that name," the old man said thoughtfully; "leastaways not in these here parts. But then I never know'd how many brothers thar war on my mother's side. How'd you come to hear 'bout him?"

Vincent was in agony lest his inward

amusement should become visible to the old man. That there could be a corner of the nation so shut in as not to know the meaning of Uncle Sam seemed unbelievable. Without meaning to take advantage of the old man's ignorance he felt impelled to see how far the simplicity showing itself would yield quaint expression.

"Why, I think he would be glad to send you some young trees," he answered evasively; "and a peck of good seed-corn would be a fine investment on that lower slope over there, where those measly nubbins grow. Why don't you plant melons, squash, onions and peas, as well as collards and white potatoes?"

"Hain't never seen none in these here parts," came the answer.

"'Pon my word! Well, Uncle Sam must send you some seed and apple slips. I will see that he does."

"What's thet? what's thet?" Uncle

Jonah exclaimed, drawing nearer the young man. "You 'low to see Uncle Sam? How'd you know he could spar' them thar things?"

"Oh, he can spare them all right, and some flowers would add greatly to the beauty of this yard of rocks, though I must say the wild flowers are gorgeous, only no perfume. What kind of flowers do you like best, Aunt Cindy?"

Aunt Cindy was busy in the cabin getting supper, but hearing the question replied: "Wal, we-uns jes' gits the kind they fetch in bags at the Forks."

"Oh, I mean flowers, flowers that bloom, Aunt Cindy,—heliotrope, geraniums, petunias and mignonette. I haven't seen a cultivated flower of fragrance in these mountains, and wonder why you people don't grow them. What kind would you like to have?" Aunt Cindy stared in silence and made no attempt to reply to the question she failed to grasp.

"By Jove! This is a shut-in community with a shut-in mentality," he sighed.

He explained the names he had mentioned, and the fragrance and beauty that would grow from seed he assured her would be forthcoming.

"But how can I get these seed and plants delivered?" he inquired of the old man.

"Wal, you jes' git 'em to the Forks, and we-uns kin git old Buck and haul 'em up the mounting," Uncle Jonah answered. "But I hain't sure that no kinsfolks of ourn ken spar' seeds an' slips both; but you ken jes' tell Uncle Sam, ef you see him, hit would be powerful 'commodation ef he ken."

"I think he can, and I will see that you get them."

"Whar'd you say my Uncle Sam lives, Mister?"

"In Washington, D. C."

"Wash'n'ton-dee-cee! Wash'n'ton-dee-cee! Wal, that hain't nowhar on this side the Ridge, air hit?"

"Well, not exactly; it takes a day and night to get to Washington, D. C., from the Forks. It's about twenty miles from here to the Forks, and about twenty miles from the Forks to Rocky Bend, where I take the train. Ever see a train?"

"Not's I knows of. What's hit like?"

Vincent gave a graphic account of the railroad train and engine and explained the trip to the city to his interested listeners. They, in turn, told him of their loneliness and hardships. "Ten dead, and ten living" was the number of children they estimated as having brought into existence.

"The five gals living air sot up," the old man explained, "and the boys they hev sot up, too; an' all of 'em hev mo' or less chillen. Our two younges'—the twins—they hev jes' run erway ergin, an'

I 'low they'll come erlong back arter they gits tired."

"Where do they go?" asked Vincent.

"Don' know, stranger; them twins air been er-runnin' erway ever since they be borned. One's jes' like t'other; what one does, t'other does; what one says, t'other says. Tim and Jim be they names."

"It seems hard to have them all leave you in your old age. Who does your plowing?"

"Wal, the boys and the gals both helps. You see old Buck—he's the steer mule—he b'longs to me an' maw, an' we loans him fus to one an' then to the t'other to plow they craps, an' they comes an' plows for we-uns fer the loan o' the critter. The twins done a sight of work, but when they gits ready to run erway, thar hain't no use to fret and worrit, they jes' goes."

"How long do they stay?"

"Wal, they hev bin gone this time

mighty nigh a year," the old man drawled. "Mighty nigh a year."

"How do you calculate time and keep figures, Uncle Jonah, when you say you can't read or write?"

"Don' know, stranger, jes' come nat'-ral, I reckin, but I knows the year pretty well, an' I kin kallate time to er day. Thar hain't nobody as kin cheat me at a bargain, and what's mo'n that, I kin gin'ly git the best uv er trade, I kin tell ye."

Vincent sat long in thought and his heart went out to this kindly old couple of waste product, as he styled them. "Yes, wasted human product," he reflected as he smoked. The old man smoked his cob pipe in silence, watching with interest the young stranger within his gates. Their best was bestowed upon the tired guest with a kindness that puts modern hospitality to shame. "Hit's the best we-uns hev," the mountaineer ex-

claimed, "but you air welcome." The rough meal of poorly cooked bread and potatoes was relished by the light of the pine-knot fire. From under the one rude bed a low trundle was pulled out, and coverlets spread for the stranger to sleep.

"Ef you keers fer the high bed me and maw will take the tunnel," Uncle Jonah remarked. "That tunnel air whar the twins sleeps when they air home. All ten of 'em what's living, an' the ten what's dead hev slep' in that tunnel. Them thar kivers war wove by maw." Aunt Cindy looked pleased at the notice given her weavings, and explaining as she spread them over the "tunnel," "This here kiver is the 'snail and the trail' pattron. I spreds hit on top fer the looks. I don't never 'spec' to weave no mo' o' them kivers. The gals they hev tuck what I wove fer them, an' the boys they hev tuck what I wove fer them; an' I 'lows to keep these here what's on this tunnel bed fer the

Pushing through this wonderful country . . . to the creek bed below

twins. Wool's hard to git these days sence we et up the sheep, and my ole back's done wo' out same's the ole lumbersome loom settin' out thar 'gin ther house. I never 'spec' to weave no mo'."

Vincent listened respectfully. With the same unaffected simplicity shown by his woodland friends, he stretched himself upon the low bed over which the hand-woven cover was so carefully spread. Early the following morning, saying good-bye, he started on his return to Washington. Pushing through this wonderful country, hoping to find a trail to the creek bed below, he thought very tenderly of the mountain friends who had housed and fed him overnight. Their kindly hand-shake and words of farewell as he parted from them at the top of the hill still lingered. He had quite forgotten the talk of the previous evening, feeling momentarily at a loss when Uncle Jonah called after him: "Don' forgit to tell my

Uncle Sam, ef you see him, how 'bleeged we-uns'll be fer a few apple slips an' corn seed, ef he kin spar' 'em."

"I won't forget, Uncle Jonah," Vincent called back, "and will see that you get them." But to himself he said, "There! I intended to explain the facts to the old people before I left; but for lack of time I'd go back now and do so." He spoke aloud, and the spoken words set him thinking and planning. Reaching the upright-board shanty of the Forks occupying the center of crossing passways, he explained to the man who owned the "store" that when a package brought there from the railroad at Rocky Bend, which he would arrange to have delivered from that point, arrived, he wanted word sent to Uncle Jonah Douglas on the Ridge. Money was given to insure the delivery of the message, and Vincent went on his way to the station at Rocky Bend, where he paid also in advance for

delivery at the "store," an added gleam of sunshine brightening his path as he thought of the pleasure he would send into those shaded lives.

II

A NEW DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WILLIAM VINCENT turned in his report on arrival at Washington. After the long weeks of tramping over rough mountainsides it was good to be back among the comforts and conveniences of civilized life. But somehow, as he walked to and from the F Street office, he found himself sniffing the air to catch the scent of balsam pine, thinking of rocks, hills and the cabin at which he had rested. A visit to the Department of Agriculture secured as soon as convenient the apple slips with a lot of seed-corn and garden seed of the very best. With boy-like pleasure Vincent prepared the package which grew into a large pack. Recalling the

rude, wooden grub, worn-out axe and lack of necessary implements, he bought an axe, spade, rake, and new rope for the steer wagon. Like a mother fixing Santa Claus for her first infant, Vincent with actual glee arranged the articles in a queer looking bundle. A couple of new knives and forks, two pretty cups and saucers were packed, a bright new tin wash-basin, towels, toilet soap, and a package of coffee, tea and tobacco. Perhaps a woman might have added a small mirror and a few personal gifts, but the thought of the man was for the most obviously needed in the isolated cabin. He chuckled with joy over sending the axe, hoe and rake, wishing he could have sent a plow, a wagon, and a new steer.

He confided the joke about Uncle Sam to his sister Lena, regretting that he had not done so before the package was shipped. The huge bundle of goods prepaid to the railroad station at Rocky

Bend, and from there to the Forks, was tagged plainly, "For Mr. Jo' Douglas (Uncle Jonah), from Uncle Sam." Of course, Vincent expected no reply. The express receipt was security for delivery. He pictured to himself the feelings of the old people when the gifts should arrive, wishing it possible to peep in upon the scene.

The depot agent at Rocky Bend sent the package promptly to the Forks by a trusty wagoner, who delivered the same to the storeman who in turn promptly sent word to the Douglas family that the things from their Uncle Sam had arrived.

Uncle Jonah walked miles to round up old Buck, the steer, to hitch to the rough slide used by mountaineers in lieu of a wagon. Young Jonah, the third, living nearest the old people, and always the most available, was also considered the most responsible for driving Buck twenty miles to the Forks and better qualified for

the undertaking than his old "dad" or "them thar young uns," and he started before dawn of that eventful day with the one prized beast of burden pulling the drag, in quest of the package from Uncle Sam. Had Uncle Jonah gone to "fetch" the things it is doubtful whether they would have been claimed, for so large a package would have seemed a mistake, and receiving it, taking advantage of some one's error. But young Jonah, not knowing the limited amount of things expected, lifted the huge pack, gladly placed it upon the runner, and said, "Tell hit ergin, Mr. Bailey" (making ready to whip up the steer for the twenty mile return), "tell hit ergin, ef you will!"

"Mr. Jo' Douglas (Uncle Jonah), from Uncle Sam," the storekeeper spelled out slowly. "Thet's hit sho'! thet's jes' what hit says," he remarked, "thet's jes' what hit says."

"Wal, hit's dad, plum sho', but whar'd

he git sich kinfolks, I'd like ter know? Git up thar, Buck. I'm obleeged, Mr. Bailey, and I'll let ye know what's in thet thar poke when I come ergin. Git up thar, Buck." Buck pulled out with slow, laborious movements. Young Jonah walked beside, holding the rope and eyeing with increasing wonder the load on the drag.

"Wal done!" he exclaimed, between the squirts of tobacco expelled from his mouth. "Wal done! Would jes' like ter know what ye be."

The trip down had been quickly made, for twenty miles is not much of a walk or drive to a native of the mountains, and young Jonah hardly noticed dangerous ledges and almost unfordable creeks which made the return trip perilous, especially hard on the ox guided up the rocky ascent with the precious load. Just before nightfall the rumbling drag was heard by Uncle Jonah and Aunt

Cindy, sitting side by side waiting for hours to hear the welcome sound.

"Gee thar. Haw thar," came audibly over the hill as young Jonah encouraged the ox to make the summit.

"Hit's young Jo' plum sho', maw. What's thet he's er-fetchin' on thet slide? Thet hain't no slips!"

"Hit looks like er dead corpse," whispered the wife, trembling with awe.

"Wal, hit hain't no dead corpse nor no livin' corpse, maw, but, by my skin hit's er powerful-lookin' critter what air hit might be."

Old Buck drew near the cabin. "Thar's the poke," young Jonah remarked, pointing to the pack on the drag. "An' hit says on hit, 'Mr. Jo' Douglas (Uncle Jonah), from Uncle Sam.' Take holt, will ye?"

Uncle Jonah removed his hat and advanced reverently to the drag, and with trembling hands helped to place the freight

carefully as he would have placed a coffin upon the grass near the cabin door.

"I'll jes' take the beastie on ter ther next hill and fetch my family while youuns gits off the bindings," Jonah remarked, taking up the frazzled lines and motioning to the steer to hurry on.

Perhaps angels looked down and smiled upon the joy that ascended from that bleak mountain top to the blue hills above, or it may be that the invisible shades of Revolutionary ancestors, whose bones were resting somewhere on the historic mountainsides, knew and smiled, too, as Uncle Jonah and Aunt Cindy unbound and laid out upon the grass the apple slips, the new axe, hoe, spade, and the wonders of the mysterious bundle.

Not an exclamation, not a word was uttered. In silence each thing was examined and laid upon the grass, the two old people gazing in awe upon their possessions.

"An' he er-livin', an' we not er-knowin' hit all th' time," whispered Uncle Jonah.

"An' to think of him er-sendin' store 'baccy, too," Aunt Cindy whispered back softly. "Yo' Uncle Sam air a plum sho' giver. An' sech er hoe! Them taters will sho' run out'n the patch when young Joe gits er-handlin' of hit. Look at them cups, now; how'd he hev the mind to send them, you reckin?"

"Fer to hold ther coffee, maw; jes' smell thet coffee! Think I'll git up some wood and make er fire and try er bit."

"Not yit, not yit, paw," the wife answered. "Young Jonah's gone to fetch ther chillen; hit will be er sight fer them ter see sech er pile o' things. Let's wait and show what Uncle Sam hev done fer we-uns and then fix ther coffee ter make thankful."

The thought of Vincent had not occurred to them, so completely had their minds been filled with the simple fact that

the things had come from their Uncle Sam. But the gratification of the real donor would have been the same could he have seen the gathering of sons, daughters, grandsons and granddaughters from hillsides and coves far and near to look upon the gifts, and rejoice over the first good fortune that had ever brightened their meager lives.

In due season the apple trees were set out, the corn, garden seeds and flowers were planted. The axe, hoe, rake, and spade were used in turn by the sons and daughters. A new impetus was given to the toilers for bread in those rocky fields and gardens, and a new era of better living by better work was begun. Even the steer seemed to feel the spirit of pride that animated life on the Ridge, as he and the slide were passed in turn with new implements to the different families. The arrival of a new baby in successive households took on the importance of a real

event, now that the new tin basin could be taken from cabin to cabin, with one of the towels and a cake of sweet-smelling soap kept for those momentous occasions.

"Ef them twins would jes' come back," whined Aunt Cindy as she lighted her pipe with a coal for the evening smoke. "Ef they jes' would come back!"

"Won't they shine they eyes when they see that pile o' wood young Jonah's done cut with Uncle Sam's axe! An' jes' think, maw, what they'll say when they see we-uns crap o' long-year'd corn!"

"An' the yard scraped up with Uncle Sam's rake, an' sweet-smellin' flowers ergrowin' whar them weeds wuz, an' peas an' beans an' all them newfangled eatin' things fer ter cook! 'Pears ter me hit's time fer jedgment day, we-uns hev got sich er lot."

"Wal, yas, an' ther craps air er sight

ter see. Maw, ther workin' o' thet hoe an' rake an' spade hev done er merracle. Young Jonah he 'lows they'll eve'y one o' the boys make 'nough o' thet long-year'd corn t' sell down t' ther Forks fer er plum sight o' things. I reckin every one o' the gals'll git some short sweet-nin' (sugar) an' er caliky (calico) frock. Ef Uncle Sam jes' know'd what them things hev done fer we-uns! I say, maw," the old man whispered suddenly, "let's go see Uncle Sam an' tell him!"

"Land sakes, paw! How air we ter ever find him?"

"Why, ter Wash'n'ton-dee-cee! thet's whar he lives. Let's pick up an' go while them twins air erway."

"Sakes erlive! Let's light out sho' 'nuff, paw. Let's light out an' go sho' 'nuff. I reckin we kin find Wash'n'ton-dee-cee ef you say so, and Uncle Sam will be powerful glad fer to see we-uns."

"He sho' will," Uncle Jonah said with

"I 'low Uncle Sam will be powerful glad to see we-uns"

some show of spirit, "and won't he be s'prised ter see his kinfolks walkin' in? Mighty s'prised I be er-thinkin'."

"Wal, I'll jes' wash out them breeches o' yourn what I wove las' year, an' patch up thet ole coat an' tetch up my indigo frock, an' git up some aigs an' make some risin' bread fer ter take 'long," Cindy drawled, beginning at once to hunt up the articles mentioned and to prepare for the ourney.

Everything in the cabin was put in order "agin the twins should come," and a stick was run through the latch to indicate that the occupants were not at home. A large splint basket containing food and a few articles of clothing, and a small basket with a "settin' of aigs" for Uncle Sam was all they carried. On the day of their departure the old couple rose long before the sun. They stopped to inform young Jo' of their plans. Jo' was dumbfounded at the news but made no objections, in-

sisting, however, on hitching Buck to the sled to take the father and mother as far as the Forks.

"When you-uns comin' back?" he inquired.

The old man replied: "I 'lows to git back erround Sunday, but thar hain't no tellin', Jo'. You jes' tell Sim an' Dan an' Zeke an' young Cindy an' Liz an' Bet to look out fer ther twins. I'm 'spectin' uv 'em mighty nigh eve'y day now. Tell all the child'en good-bye. Let's be er-gettin' naw."

Young Jo's wife and all his children followed the old folks a mile or more down the mountain, then with a hand-shake, returned to the cabin to assemble the Douglases from far and near to tell them that dad and maw had departed for Wash'n'ton-dee-cee to see their Uncle Sam. The arrival of Uncle Sam's package was hardly a greater event than the fact that maw and paw had gone down

the Ridge which they had never before been known to leave.

At the Forks the old couple were fortunate enough to get a lift on a wagon starting the next morning for Rocky Bend. About dusk the next day they alighted stiff and tired from the wagon, after the long, jolting ride. Uncle Jonah promptly asked for tickets for "Wash'n'-ton-dee-cee."

"You mean Washington city, I s'posen," the agent remarked after a moment of thought.

"No, sir, Wash'n'ton-dee-cee is whar I'm bound fer," Uncle Jonah insisted. "Wash'n'ton-dee-cee."

"Wal, hit's all the same, I reckin," the agent contended. "Washington, D. C., and Washington city air all one and the same on these tickets. You want returns, I s'posen?"

"Wal, yas, we 'lows to return," the old man said pulling out a home-knit

sock from his shirt front, "we 'lows to return." The agent selected the amount of the two return tickets from the soiled bills in the sock.

"But fer ther big crap o' thet long-year'd corn what come from Uncle Sam last fall, this old sock would be plum flat," the mountaineer explained. "Thet corn air a sight fer sore eyes, Mister. Reckin you never seed none like hit. Jes' look here! I'm er-takin' this year to show our kin what kinder corn we done riz from them seeds. This here nubbin is the kind we riz before we git the seed." The agent looked with interest at the long ear and the nubbin, smiling as he explained the train would be due in half an hour, and would reach Washington, D. C., the next morning about six o'clock.

Hardly had the old folks finished eating a bite of supper from the basket when the Southern rushed into the station with great puffing and blowing. Tremblingly

they ascended the steps and took their seats in the day-coach for the city.

"What you got to say to this hyar travilin' train, Mrs. Douglas?" Mr. Douglas asked in an undertone.

Mrs. Douglas, who had been "jes' Cindy" since her marriage, and "jes' Aunt Cindy" since attaining the dignity of a "gran'maw," replied under her breath, "Hit's er-runnin' erway, I'm 'feered. Does you reckin they ken head her off, Mr. Douglas?"

"Wal, I don' know. We hev jes' got ter hold on, I reckin."

"I say, paw," whispered the frightened wife, after a pause.

"Wal, what ye got on yo' mind, maw?" he responded, kindly.

"S'posen them twins never comes back?" whispered Cindy. "I feels kinder like I wish we-uns hadn't lef' the Ridge. 'Pears like the Lord air callin' ter we-uns ter go back."

"Ef you feel thet way, maw, hit's gittin' time fer ter pray. S'posen we jes' up an' ax Him what ter do. We air bound ter trust Him, you know." The old man stole his arm around the bent shoulders of the tired woman and silently they prayed, unconscious of time and unconsciously going to sleep leaning closely together.

III

"WASH'N'TON-DEE-CEE"

THE old couple followed the crowd from the train up the steps to the great white marble waiting-room, where they sat down in speechless amazement. For over an hour they remained looking and wondering. It was about 7:30 when they decided to venture forth. An enterprising coloured hackman, noticing their bewilderment, immediately took possession of their big basket saying, "Which way, boss; which way you want to go?"

"Why—why, ter our Uncle Sam's," Mr. Douglas replied; "could you jes' p'int ther way ter whar he lives, you reckin?"

The darky, with a broad grin and a perfect understanding, replied:

"Does yo' mean de White House, boss? Hit's called Uncle Sam's residence by de people."

"Wal, now, I reckin thet's jes' whar he lives. Ef you'll p'int the way."

"Yas, sah, you and de lady git right in, an' I'll drive you right dah dis minnit."

"Wal, now, you air the most 'commodatin' critter I hev ever seen, ef you air a nigger," the old man remarked as he pushed Mrs. Douglas into the open carriage and pulled himself in after her.

The darky laughed, climbed to his seat after fixing their baskets inside, cracked his whip and started for the Executive Mansion.

"Dat's de Capitol over dah wha' Uncle Sam carries on de business of de nation," the darky called out, pointing to the glorious dome from where the stars and stripes were floating out upon the early morning breeze. "An' dat's de

Liberry of Congress," he continued, "an' de next red building we is comin' to is de Pension Office. I 'spec' you is come fer ter see Uncle Sam 'bout gittin' a pension, ain't dat so, boss?"

Uncle Jonah (Mr. Jo' Douglas) looked at Aunt Cindy (Mrs. Jo' Douglas). Aunt Cindy looked at Uncle Jonah.

"Ef thet hain't th' beatenes'!" Mr. Douglas exclaimed; "ef thet hain't th' *very* beatenes'! Why, he p'int-blank knows Uncle Sam, an' talks erbout him jes' as if he war kin ter him hisself, an' he er nigger!" The rumble of the wheels over the pavement prevented the comment from reaching the ears of the hackman, who was speeding through the streets at a rattling rate.

Near the White House a stream of men and women were crossing the Avenue on their way to the War and Navy Department. Among the crowd was the young surveyor, William Vincent. As

the carriage turned in at the White House grounds he caught sight of the couple. At first he could not believe his eyes, but from first to last there was no mistaking the personalities in that open carriage. The sunbonnet, home-spun clothes, big splint basket, and the small one.

"By all the mysteries of creation!" he exclaimed. "Hello, there! Stop, driver. By Jove! *Uncle Jonah! Aunt Cindy!* Where on earth did you come from?" The negro driver drew up sharp.

"Why, hit's the young man what told us erbout Uncle Sam!" Uncle Jonah said excitedly. "Ef thet hain't luck! Wal, me and maw hev come ter see our kin and thank him fer ther apple slips, corn an' all them things he sent ter we-uns."

Vincent shook hands with his friends in a state bordering on acute hysteria. How on earth was he to explain matters without hurting the feelings of these good

but peculiar friends? Their unexpected appearance gave him such a shock that his whole body quivered with suppression of inward amusement.

"We hev a sample o' the corn an' one o' them nubbins you laughed at, an' er settin' er aigs," Uncle Jonah announced in a tone of honest satisfaction.

"By Jove! By Jove!" was all Vincent could say.

"Wal, cussin' air powerful expressin', sonny, an' we air powerful pleased ter see how pleased you air ter see we-uns. But I reckin we better be er-gettin' ter Uncle Sam; he mout be leavin' fer ther patch," the old man remarked. Vincent, in consternation, got in by the driver, who was chuckling with intense enjoyment. At the White House door he hardly waited to help the couple alight before rushing on ahead to ask for an immediate interview with the President's aide. While hurriedly explaining the sit-

uation to that courteous officer, well known to Mr. Vincent, Uncle Jonah and Aunt Cindy were endeavouring to make their way into the reception hall.

"Wal, yas," Uncle Jonah explained most emphatically to the orderly who was trying in vain to hold them at bay, "I sed Uncle Sam; we air come fer ter see him."

"Uncle Sam means the United States government—the nation," the orderly explained, "and this is the White House where the President lives."

"And the President stands for Uncle Sam," remarked a young woman who happened to pass at that moment and to hear the conversation, "and he is therefore the uncle as well as the chief of his people. I am sure he will be very glad to see you both. Is it not Uncle Jonah and Aunt Cindy?"

With only a faint understanding of what it all meant, Uncle Jonah stared

with delight at the beautiful girl, exclaiming:

"By gosh! 'Scuse my cussin', honey, but air you Uncle Sam's gal? We-uns air powerful glad ter see ye. An' ter think ye know'd us at onct."

"The President is my father," she replied, "and if you will sit here a moment I will go and bring him."

The President's young daughter had taken in the situation with a rare presence of mind. She had read of the mountain people, had also heard interesting talks by the Mountain Mission workers before her church guild, and had given some thought to the national problem and its responsibility. She had also heard Vincent's sister, a member of her guild, whisper the story of the joke about Uncle Sam. The young girl almost collided with Vincent as she rushed for her father. "Oh!" she exclaimed, "this is Mr. Vincent, Lena's brother! You see I know

you, Mr. Vincent, and I also know something of the joke you have played on those dear old people. I am perfectly delighted that they have come to make the acquaintance of 'Uncle Sam.' It is the only practical joke I ever approved of. I must get my father."

She darted away to the breakfast-room and with rapid tongue told the astonished President of the remarkable situation. With ready tact, the President accompanied his daughter to the visitors waiting in the reception hall.

Vincent could have fallen on his knees in gratitude to the "first young lady of the land," or as he afterwards called her, the "first young angel of the White House." He shook hands with the old couple—almost embraced the officer at the door, paid the hackman, and bounded away to call up his sister Lena, telling her the news.

"Come right in to breakfast, my

friends," the President said heartily, shaking the hard-crusted hands outstretched in response to his greeting. "Come right in; I am sure you must be hungry after your long trip."

They followed the President into the breakfast-room; seats were ready and breakfast served as they had never seen a meal before; made to feel welcome and at ease; eating with enjoyment delicacies placed before them; accepting a second cup of coffee; cooling and drinking from dainty china saucers; they did as they were wont at their own rough board table far away on the mountain crest.

"This air plum fine coffee," Mr. Douglas remarked, draining the last drop,—"hit 'pears like things air powerful lively round heer—'pears like luck hev drapped right down your way, Uncle Sam; we-uns never 'spected to find no sich fixed up kin."

"It is not exactly a blood kinship," an-

swered the President, smiling, "only a national relationship which I am sure will bring satisfaction. I am sorry to leave, but my daughter will explain matters and make you and Aunt Cindy feel at home."

"To be sho'—to be sho'—Uncle Sam, me and maw air plum satisfied; thet's a powerful good-lookin' gal o' yourn—jes' er little bit like our youngest gal Ret,—she ken tek keer we-uns all right."

As happily unconscious as Adam and Eve before their eyes were opened, the old couple pushed back from the table with increasing ease and satisfaction.

In the guest's chamber of the White House, Uncle Jonah and Aunt Cindy would have felt at a loss had it not been for that "first young angel," who with delicate tact explained the mysteries of the room.

"What's them long white things on ther side uv ther bed, maw?"

"Why, them air night frocks, paw!"

"What fur?"

"To war in ther bed!"

"In ther bed?"

"Thet's what Uncle Sam's gal say. I 'low to put one on this blessed night, an' what's mo' I 'low to git in thet white chiny wash-tub like she done tole me."

"Git in thet white chiny wash-tub? Why, lan' sakes, maw, hain't you feer'd uv takin' down?"

"Hit hain't no usen ter git feer'd, paw. Hain't you 'lowin' ter git er wash?"

"To be sho', maw, but I never 'lowed to git *in*. Why, I hain't been wet all over *at one time* since I war baptized in ther creek. I tuck pneumony then, an' I hain't been in ther branch since."

"Wal, I hain't no Baptist, paw, and hain't never been dipped, an' I jes' 'lows hit will be plum nice to hev er wash-tub what hain't jes' beg enough fer one foot at er time."

"Wal, ef you don't tek down with cold

I 'low to try hit, mebbe. What's thet fuss, maw?"

"Hit's jes' ther water turnt in, paw."

"Ef I didn't think hit war them waterfalls on the Ridge! Wal, wal! what'd young Jo' think ef he could heer thet water er-coming outer ther wal', and see thet white chiny wash-tub?"

Lena Vincent had hardly recovered from the news communicated by her brother when a messenger came with a note requesting her presence at the White House. In company with the President's daughter, she had the great joy of conducting "Uncle Sam's" guests in the President's carriage to the Capitol, Library, Army and Navy Departments, Monument, Art Gallery and stores.

The Department of Agriculture received their warmest admiration. Uncle Jonah insisted that "hit war mo' use" than all the rest of the Capitol "as fer as he could jedge."

The relationship having been carefully explained, the old man felt a personal satisfaction in knowing that "Uncle Sam, the government, war more powerful than jes' blood kin when hit come to gettin' seedlin' and sich fer makin' better craps."

On Sunday these quaint cousins occupied the President's pew at St. John's Church, and all unconscious of the attention they attracted, listened to the organ, to the vested choir, and to the Gospel.

When, with excess of joy, a week later they were driven to the station and placed on a Pullman for the return trip to Rocky Bend, Lena Vincent was also a passenger on the train, with a ticket to the same destination. In the baggage car was a trunk in which there were more surprises for the "child'en and gran'child'en" than any package of apple trees and garden implements could contain. A box holding school-books, slates, blackboards and maps was also checked through, and in

the little hand-bag on her arm Lena Vincent carried a teacher's certificate with a permit to start a school for the younger generation on Douglas Ridge. "Uncle Sam" had not been content with merely the agricultural interests of his mountain friends in sowing the seeds of intellectual development.

IV

THE RUNAWAY TWINS

WHEN the train on which our friends were returning reached Rocky Bend, two tangled-haired, barefoot boys standing among the crowd of idlers at the station stared with amazement as Mr. and Mrs. Douglas alighted.

"Maw! Paw! es sho' es my name air Tim," exclaimed the first boy.

"Maw! Paw! es sho' es my name air Jim," exclaimed the second boy.

"Ther twins!" exclaimed Mrs. Douglas, espying the runaways on the moment.

"*Ther twins!*" echoed Mr. Douglas.

"Wal! whar hev ye drapped from?"

"Jes' come," answered Tim.

"Jes' come," echoed Jim.

"Hit's ther answer ter ther prayer,

paw!" cried the mother, putting her trembling arms over the two boys; "hit's ther answer ter prayer!—praised be ther Lord,—He hev sure sent you-uns back ter mek ther worl' seem like He do keer fer we-uns."

"Whar yer bin, maw?" asked Tim.

"Whar yer bin, paw?" echoed Jim.

"Bin ter Wash'n'ton-dee-cee, Tim. Bin ter Wash'n'ton-dee-cee, Jim, an' sich er time as we hev hed! Went ter see our Uncle Sam—not blood kin, ye know—jes' national relationship—leastways thet's how he 'splains hit. He an' ther nation an' ther President an' ther Capitol an' Wash'n'ton-dee-cee an' ther Department uv Agy'culchy air jes' one an' ther same, an' he air related thet way ter mighty nigh ev'ybody in ther worl'."

The crowd gathered near to listen.

"Whut's thet yer air saying, Mr. Douglas?" asked some mountain acquaintance.

"I war sayin' thet thar hain't no use

ter worrit no more when ev'y man erlive in these here mountains air related ter Uncle Sam. Why, ef you-uns hed jes' know'd hit, thar could er bin long-year'd corn craps erplenty in these heer parts fer ev'y one uv ye. Why, Uncle Sam—what air kinfolks to ev'y one uv ye—kin jes' erbout do whut he blame pleases. All we hez ter do air ter jes' go ter thet Department uv Agy'culchy an' ax fer jes' what seeding we-uns wants. Why, Uncle Sam lives in er house mighty nigh big as Douglas Ridge, an' sich fixin's you hain't never seed! Ev'ybody in Wash-'n'ton-dee-cee works fer him, an' ev'y man alive uv 'em gits money. Why, folks, Uncle Sam's Treasury, whar he keeps ther money, air mighty nigh big es ther Ridge."

"I wants ter work fer Uncle Sam," said Tim.

"I wants ter work fer Uncle Sam," said Jim.

"And so you shall," remarked Miss Vincent, whose eyes were moist. "But first we will go to the Ridge and start our school. Uncle Sam needs lots of mountain boys to replenish his ranks of workers and soldiers."

"I wants ter be er soldier fer Uncle Sam—an' fight fer him," cried Tim.

"I wants ter be er soldier fer Uncle Sam—an' fight fer him," echoed Jim.

There was a great outburst of hurrahing from the delighted crowd in the meeting-house.

A wagon was procured and the old couple, with the twins, and the "fotch on" teacher, were driven in triumph to the Forks, where young Jonah met them with old Buck and the slide. Such rejoicing was never known before on the Ridge.

Word of Uncle Jonah's return and his wonderful news was "norated" far and wide through the mountains, and he was

called upon later to speak on the "National Relationship."

Miss Vincent was the happiest of all—directing the building of the schoolhouse and a lean-to, for her own use, to the Douglas home. The twins became a power of strength in her community work, leading the boy brigade of embryo soldiers preparing to give their services, as their ancestors did, to fight, bleed and die for Uncle Sam.

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